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Documents from the October 1, 2012 meeting of the Associated Students of the University of Montana (ASUM)

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ASUM Senate/City Council Meeting
Monday, October 1, 2012
Missoula City Council Chambers, 5:30 p.m.

Chair Marler called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. Present: President Brown, Vice President Hagfors, Business Manager Nielsen, Professor Smith; and Senators Bird, Boslough, Brown, Coon, Dolezal, Faircloth, Freund, Gordon, Hazen, Hopkins, LeCoultré, Oliver, Ormseth, Rich, Sather, Simpson, D., Watkins, and Williams. Unexcused: Senators Ferrara and Simpson, B.

Public Comment

- Paul Bohan, Missoula community member, has spoken at many different city governance meetings and felt that his voice was not being heard.
- Katie Nelson, Project Manager of UM FLAT, spoke to the Senate and the City Council about the importance of residential learning communities.
- Lee Clemmenson, Missoula community member, lives across the street from the Miller Hall bus stop and stated that there was extreme amounts of noise and pollution from ASUM buses. She asked ASUM Transportation to consider modernizing their fleet or merging with Mountain Line to obtain a cleaner, quieter group of buses.

ASUM/City Council Meeting

- a. Chair Marler welcomed the ASUM senators and executives to the meeting.
- b. Student Housing Access & Affordability
 1. ASUM's Plan to Develop a University's Student Housing Master Plan Committee
 - Sandy Schoonover, Director of Residence Life and chair of The University of Montana's Student Housing Master Plan Committee, gave an overview of what the committee has accomplished thus far and welcomed any input from the council.
 - President Brown asked the council to consider co-chairing the committee to have a bigger impact.
 - Councilman Wilkins took the opportunity to mention an off-campus rental safety program that inspects housing for the Missoula community to ensure they are up to code. If any student feels that their rental is sub-par, Councilman Wilkins urged them to call the Missoula City Building Inspection Office at (406) 552-6040.
 - Councilman Taft spoke about increasing the supply of housing and advised ASUM to think more broadly, suggesting that executives seek federal grants to help solve the housing shortage. He also stressed that Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are a simple solution to this issue.
 - ASUM Senators LeCoultré and Bird spoke on the topic of a Missoula zoning ordinance banning the establishment of additional houses for Greek Life. They stressed that sororities and fraternities are a positive voice in the community and that the negative connotations in popular culture are not truly indicative of the type of students who participate in Greek Life.

- Councilman Childers suggested that, during the construction of the new Missoula College campus, some room be set aside specifically for use by Greek Life.
- ASUM Business Manager Nielsen returned to the topic of renter safety and pointed out that college students are particularly at-risk for unsafe housing due to low rent, and students are also less likely to use inspection services due to the risk of losing housing at such a low rate.
- Councilman Wilkins responded by explaining that not many houses are completely condemned and that there are only fifteen (15) items on the inspection report to avoid such circumstances. He also noted that most fixes required by the inspection officer are usually quite cheap to make.
- ASUM Business Manager Nielsen agreed that those were all good measures that have been taken, but that students worry of a damaged relationship with their landlord if they were to report their housing. She explained that Missoula is a landlord market, as opposed to a renter market, and it would be very easy for a landlord to refuse a student the renewal of their lease if the student reports them to inspections.
- President Brown brought the conversation to a close by urging the council to combine resources with ASUM to fight the rising need for safe, affordable housing.

c. Quality of Life Issues in Neighborhoods

1. The Neighborhood Ambassador Program

- President Brown gave a brief overview of the ASUM Off-Campus Renter Center and Neighborhood Ambassador Program.
- Katherine Brady, Director of the ASUM Off-Campus Renter Center, walked the council through the duties of the Renter Center. She explained that 10,000 of the 15,000 students at UM live off-campus and stressed the need for good relations between these students and the community. The size of the Neighborhood Ambassador Program has increased to meet these needs, doubling in size in the last year to cover the entire University District. She gave an overview of Sunday Sweepers, a program where students get together the Sunday after Grizzly football games to clean up the streets. October will be a time for outreach to off-campus students regarding proper trash disposal and recycling options.
- Councilman Strohmaier noted that not all college students live in the University District and the program should be expanded city-wide.
- Councilman Wilkins had noticed that the UM Ambassadors have not been treated well at neighborhood councils, but that he would like to see them work with the problem houses in each neighborhood, as well as the community as a whole.
- ASUM Senator Williams, representing ASUM Transportation, stated that The University of Montana is unique on a national platform as one of the only schools that owns, organizes, and operates its own transportation program. He addressed the issues raised in public comment by noting that it takes one year for new buses to get delivered, but he estimated that

ASUM will have an entirely new fleet of buses by 2015-2016. ASUM Transportation has also been in close collaboration with Mountain Line.

- Councilman Taft emphasized the importance again of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Public Comment

- Paul Bohan explained that the hostility towards ADUs is justified because many people spoke out at council meetings against them, but he felt that nobody listened to their requests. He further explained that the families that bought into the University District neighborhood liked the area for its single-family homes, but the addition of ADUs will change the neighborhood into something different. He also felt that The University of Montana is trying to expand into surrounding neighborhoods without giving proper justification for affecting the people who live in those neighborhoods.
- Lee Clemenson also said that she attended a meeting of seventy (70) people regarding ADUs, and only four (4) of the people present were for the approval. She urged ASUM to realize that people's reactions to the ADU zoning change are not a personal attack on the students, but rather to the change in lifestyle and threat against the quality of life that they bought into when they purchased their single-family homes.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Julia Evans
ASUM Senate Secretary